NEW MEXICO
Developmental
Disabilities
Council



COUNCIL MEMBER PACKET

UPDATED SEPT 2026

NEW MEXICO
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

625 SILVER VE SW SUITE 100A
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87102

WWW.NMDDC.ORG

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Our Mission

The Developmental Disabilities Council will promote advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change to improve the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

Our Vision

New Mexicans with developmental disabilities and their families will have a culturally competent and coordinated individual and family-centered and family-directed, comprehensive system of community services, individualized supports and other forms of assistance that will enable New Mexicans with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination, be independent, productive, integrated and included in all facets of community life.

Our Guiding Principles

Nothing About Us Without Us

DDC's work is guided by the meaningful participation of people with developmental disabilities and their families. The Council and its programs will:

- Center self-determination and choice by supporting people with developmental disabilities in making decisions about their own lives and directing the services and supports they receive.
- Promote inclusion and community participation so that people with developmental disabilities have meaningful opportunities to learn, work, lead, and participate in all aspects of community life.
- Protect rights, dignity, and safety by advancing practices and systems that respect individual rights and promote the least restrictive and most person-centered approaches.
- Amplify lived experience and leadership by ensuring people with developmental disabilities and their families have meaningful roles in advocacy, planning, policy development, and systems change.
- Advance equitable statewide access by addressing barriers experienced by rural, tribal, underserved, and other communities with limited access to disability services, information, and supports.
- Build strong partnerships and community capacity by working with individuals, families, state agencies, tribal communities, advocacy organizations, service providers, and other partners to strengthen systems across New Mexico.
- Promote accountability and effective use of resources through responsible stewardship, data-informed decision-making, evaluation, transparency, and continuous improvement.

Council Member Duties & Responsibilities

Serving on the New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Council (NMDDC) is an opportunity to help shape the systems, supports, and policies that impact individuals with developmental disabilities and their families statewide. Council members play a crucial role in advancing advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change that aligns with the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act and New Mexico state law.

Core Responsibilities

- Advance the Mission: Support statewide efforts that promote self-determination, independence, and inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- State Plan Development: Participate in creating, implementing, and evaluating the Council's Five-Year State Plan. Provide input on goals, barriers, and opportunities for advancement to ensure the plan remains effective and community centered.
- Policy Engagement: Review legislation and regulations that affect New Mexicans with developmental disabilities. Ensure Council perspectives are informed and reflective of community needs.
- Governance & Budget Oversight: Help approve and oversee the budget for Council programs, projects, and activities. Maintain the Council's independence and alignment with federal and state requirements.

Appointment Process

- Council members are appointed by the Governor of New Mexico to serve three-year terms, with the option to serve two consecutive terms.
    - Members whose terms have expired shall be considered bona fide voting members until they are re-appointed or replaced by the Governor.
- Appointments reflect geographic, racial, and cultural diversity of the state and follow federal requirements regarding representation of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
    - At least 60% of the council make up must consist of family members and self-advocates. Council membership includes statutory representation from relevant state agencies, the state University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) and Protection & Advocacy (P&A), and may include tribal entities, non-governmental agencies, and non-profit groups serving the disability community in the state.

Attendance Expectations

- Consistent participation is essential. Missing one meeting without justification triggers a notice, and missing two may result in a request for removal and replacement.
- Members should be prepared, active participants in discussions and voting.

Committee Participation

- Members are expected to engage in Council committees, task forces, and study groups. Committee participation strengthens program oversight, legislative engagement, membership development, and strategic planning.

Role Within the Community

Council members serve as the eyes, ears, and voice of the New Mexico disability community:

- Listen to individuals, families, advocates, and service providers statewide.
- Bring forward emerging issues, barriers, and successes.
- Share Council information, initiatives, and opportunities with the public.
- Promote culturally and linguistically competent systems and supports.

Helpful Links:

NM DDC Member By Laws

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD)

iTACC DD Council Member Guide

UNM Center for Development & Disability (NM UCEDD)

iTACC DD Council Member Resources

Disability Rights New Mexico (DRNM)

Follow us and stay connected

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YouTube @nmddc4456

www.nmddc.org

Organizational Structure

The Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) is a state agency established under New Mexico law and operates as the state's federally authorized Council on Developmental Disabilities under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act.
DDC's work is carried out through the Council, agency administration, federal grants and initiatives, and three direct service and advocacy programs.

Developmental Disabilities Council
Governor-appointed Council members provide leadership and direction for DDC's federally required activities and Five-Year State Plan. At least 60 percent of the Council's membership must consist of individuals with developmental disabilities or their family members, ensuring that people with lived experience have a central role in identifying priorities and guiding the Council's work.

Agency Administration
DDC's administrative functions support the Council and all agency programs through executive leadership, fiscal management, procurement, human resources, federal grant administration, compliance, and general agency operations. These functions provide the infrastructure necessary to responsibly manage state and federal resources and support statewide programs.

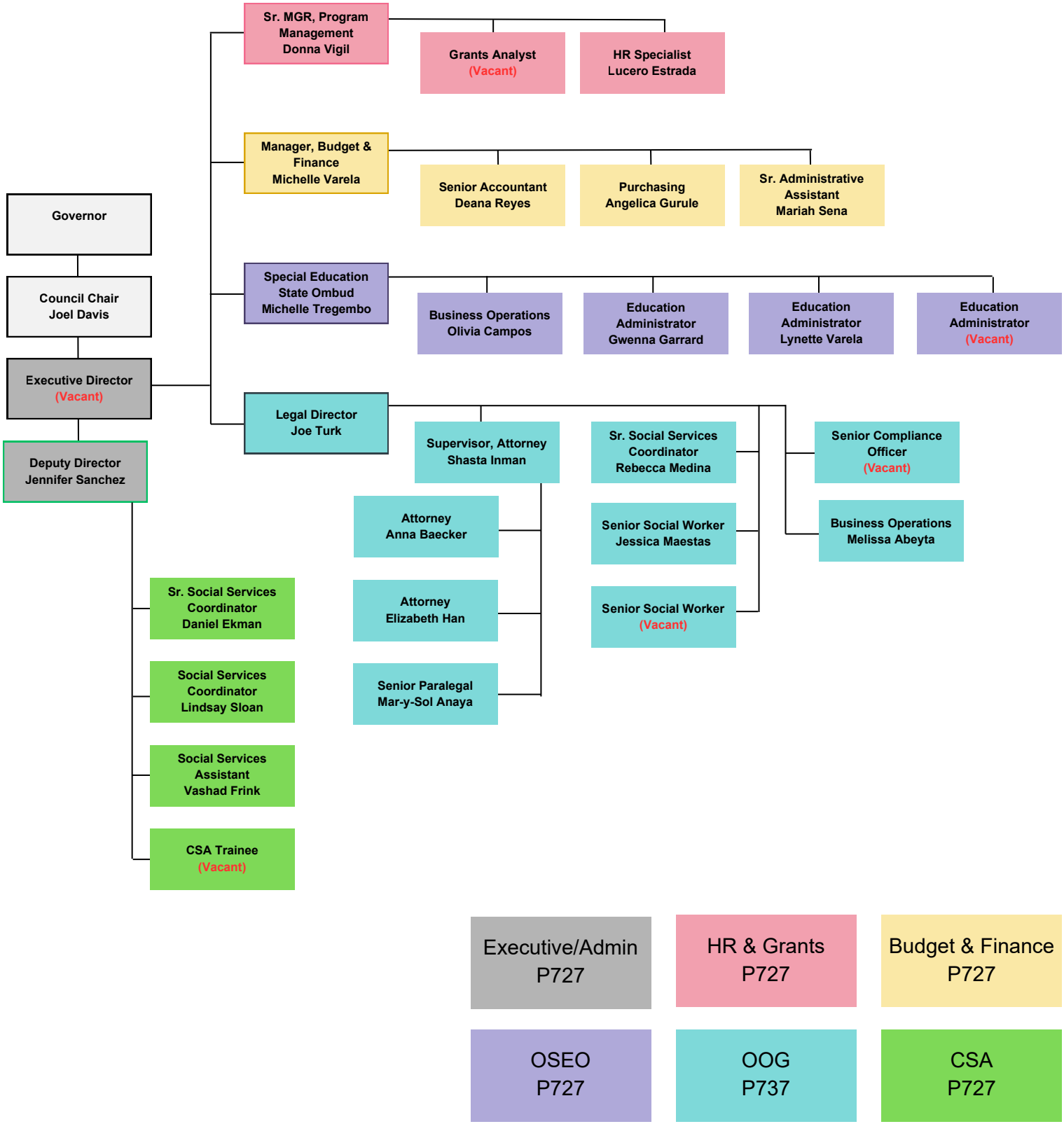
Federal Grants and Initiatives
As New Mexico's federally authorized Developmental Disabilities Council, DDC receives federal funding under the DD Act to implement its Five-Year State Plan. DDC administers these funds through grants, contracts, partnerships, and Council-led initiatives focused on advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change.

Center for Self-Advocacy (CSA)
Through lived-experience, CSA strengthens self-advocacy, leadership, self-determination, and community participation among New Mexicans with developmental disabilities through training, outreach, peer engagement, and leadership opportunities.

Office of the Special Education Ombud (OSEO)
OSEO provides information, resources, consultation, and advocacy support to students with disabilities and their families navigating New Mexico's special education system. OSEO also collects and analyzes information to identify systemic issues and support improvements in special education.

Office of Guardianship (OOG)
OOG administers New Mexico's publicly funded guardianship program for eligible adults, provides access to professional guardianship services, oversees contracted guardianship services, and promotes awareness and the education of available decision-making supports and options.

DDC Organizational Chart



2027–2031 Five-Year State Plan

The Five-Year Plan outlines the NM Developmental Disabilities Council's goals and objectives to improve the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families throughout New Mexico. Over the next five years, the Council will focus on strengthening partnerships, increasing education and awareness, and advancing opportunities that promote inclusion, self-determination, and community participation.

The goals and objectives included in this plan were developed through outreach and feedback from individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, family members, advocates, service providers, and community partners from across New Mexico. Their experiences, priorities, and recommendations helped shape the Council's vision and areas of focus for the next five years. This plan will take effect October 1, 2026.

GOAL 1: IMPROVED ACCESS TO HEALTH AND HOME & COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

Individuals with developmental disabilities will experience improved access to equitable, high-quality healthcare and community-based services through increased provider knowledge, enhanced communication supports, and expanded access to disability-informed services across the lifespan.

Objectives:
• 1.1: Increase healthcare provider understanding of developmental disabilities across the lifespan, with a focus on improving care in rural and tribal communities.
• 1.2: Improve communication between individuals with developmental disabilities and healthcare providers by expanding accessible communication tools, advocacy supports, and person-centered practices.
• 1.3: Increase access to disability-informed healthcare navigation by sponsoring neurodivergent peer support services and supporting policies that strengthen and grow the direct support workforce.
• 1.4: Improve knowledge of available support services for individuals with developmental disabilities at all life stages, with targeted focus on aging adults and rural communities with limited access to care and resources.

GOAL 2: SELF-DETERMINATION, ADVOCACY, AND LEADERSHIP

Individuals with developmental disabilities, family members, and community stakeholders will have increased knowledge, skills, and opportunities to advocate for policy and system change that improves access to services, supports, and inclusive community living.

Objectives:
• 2.1: Increase the number of trained self-advocates, family members, and community leaders engaged in systems change and policy advocacy through partnerships with state agencies, nonprofits, and local community leaders.
• 2.2: Strengthen the capacity of individuals and organizations to influence local, state, and tribal policies.
• 2.3: Expand partnerships with UCEDD, universities, tribal colleges, and advocacy organizations to support advocacy and leadership development statewide for people with developmental disabilities with an emphasis on rural, frontier, and tribal areas.

GOAL 3: EDUCATION

Students with developmental disabilities and their families will have centralized and increased access to accurate, consistent, and culturally and linguistically appropriate information and supports starting at age 14 (or younger), that promote successful transition to adulthood, including supported pathways to graduation and employment, post-secondary education, and independent living.

Objectives:
• 3.1: Centralize and increase visibility and access to standardized, plain-language transition resources across New Mexico to families and students at the earliest appropriate age (14 years or younger).
• 3.2: Ensure New Mexico’s students receive the individualized supports, services, and transition planning outlined in their IEPs to successfully meet state graduation requirements and post-school goals.
• 3.3: Strengthen interagency coordination among the Office of Special Education at the Public Education Department, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, and adult service systems across the state to improve educational and employment outcomes.

GOAL 4: FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families will be empowered to access support and opportunities they need to build long-term financial security.

Objectives:
• 4.1: Partner with state agencies and financial programs to increase access to benefits navigation and financial decision-making supports.
• 4.2: Centralize information on resources and increase financial literacy and awareness.
• 4.3: Strengthen partnerships supporting long-term financial planning and promoting system improvements.
• 4.4: Increase awareness of financial rights, protections, and decision-making supports, and promote self-determination for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Implementing the Five-Year State Plan

DDC implements the Five-Year State Plan through federally funded grants and initiatives, partnerships with disability and community organizations, collaboration with state and federal partners, and activities led by the Council and agency staff.

Projects funded through the Five-Year State Plan are expected to demonstrate measurable progress toward the goals and outcomes established by the Council. DDC will use program data, participant feedback, surveys, and other evaluation methods to monitor implementation, identify areas for improvement, and inform future funding and policy decisions.

Throughout implementation, DDC will continue to advocate for and prioritize the participation of people with developmental disabilities and their families and will work to ensure that initiatives are responsive to the geographic, cultural, and community needs of New Mexicans throughout the state.

"Advocacy is not just a task for charismatic individuals or high-profile community organizers. Advocacy is for all of us; advocacy is a way of life. It is a natural response to the injustices and inequality in the world."

— ALICE WONG
DISABILITY VISIBILITY: FIRST-PERSON STORIES FROM THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Programs

DDC administers three programs that provide direct services, advocacy, education, information, and support to individuals with disabilities and families throughout New Mexico. Each program carries distinct responsibilities while contributing to DDC's broader mission of promoting advocacy, capacity building, self-determination, and systemic improvement.

Center for Self-Advocacy - P727

Program Description
The Center for Self-Advocacy (CSA) strengthens the disability community in New Mexico by providing leadership and advocacy training, social and community engagement opportunities, and accessible information and resources. CSA supports people with developmental disabilities in building the knowledge, skills, relationships, and confidence needed to advocate for themselves, participate in their communities, and take on leadership roles.

Primary Services
CSA provides the Advocacy Leadership Academy, peer and social engagement, youth leadership opportunities, community outreach, accessible disability-related information and resources, and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to take part in advocacy and community leadership.

"Nothing about us without us."

NMDDC, like disabled peoples organizations around the world, believes in the active involvement of persons with disabilities in the planning of strategies and policies that affect their lives. The motto "Nothing About Us Without Us" sets the expectation that there be full participation and equalization of opportunities for, by and with persons with disabilities.



Office of the Special Education Ombud - P727

Program Description
The Office of the Special Education Ombud (OSEO) assists public school students with disabilities and their families in navigating New Mexico's special education system. OSEO provides information, consultation, and individual advocacy; builds statewide knowledge and capacity; and uses data and family experiences to identify systemic issues and support improvements in special education.

Primary Services
OSEO provides intake and consultation, individualized family advocacy, information and resources regarding special education rights and processes, statewide training and outreach, district liaison development, online educational resources, data collection and analysis, and recommendations addressing systemic special education issues.

The OSEO will advocate with families to ensure Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), SAT, and Section 504 plans are data-based, inclusive, recognize the family as the student's chief caregiver, are implemented as written, and create opportunities for students to achieve their highest level of independence and self-actualization.



Office of Guardianship - P737

Program Description
The Office of Guardianship (OOG) provides legal and guardianship services for eligible adults who require guardianship and do not have the financial resources to obtain these services independently. OOG assists eligible families seeking appointment of a family member as guardian and provides access to professional guardianship when an appropriate family member or other individual is not available to serve.

OOG supports and oversees professional guardianship services for the duration of the guardianship, monitors service quality and the well-being of the people for whom it provides professional guardianship services, and responds to concerns regarding contracted service providers. OOG also promotes self-determination through education and access to Supported Decision-Making and other less restrictive alternatives to guardianship.

Primary Services
OOG provides publicly funded legal services for eligible family and professional guardianship appointments and supports eligible families through the family guardianship appointment process. OOG administers and oversees ongoing professional guardianship services, monitors service quality through assessments, welfare visits, and comprehensive service reviews, responds to complaints, monitors access to services and the guardianship wait list, and provides education and resources on guardianship, Supported Decision-Making, and other less restrictive alternatives. Finally, OOG contracts treatment guardianship services for qualifying New Mexicans with mental health concerns who are not capable of consenting to treatment on their own.



FY28 Agency Priorities

During FY28, DDC will focus on strengthening the agency's capacity to effectively administer its programs, federal grants, and statewide responsibilities while responding to increasing demand for services and information. Agency-wide priorities include:

- Strengthening statewide access and outreach by expanding connections with rural, tribal, and underserved communities and increasing access to information, training, and services.
- Improving program capacity and service delivery by strengthening workflows, staffing, partnerships, and resources to respond effectively to growing program responsibilities and demand.
- Strengthening data and performance management by improving data collection, monitoring outcomes, and using program information to guide decision-making, resource allocation, and continuous improvement.
- Maintaining strong fiscal and administrative oversight through effective budget management, procurement, contract administration, federal grant management, personnel processes, and compliance.
- Strengthening coordination across DDC programs and initiatives to leverage agency expertise, reduce duplication, and better connect individuals and families with available resources.
- Maintaining meaningful participation of people with developmental disabilities and families in Council priorities, program development, advocacy, and systems-change activities.





Appendices

Appendix A — Governing Authority

- Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 — 42 U.S.C. §§ 15001–15115
- New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Act — NMSA 1978, §§ 28-16A-1 et seq.
- Office of Guardianship Act — NMSA 1978, §§ 28-16B-1 et seq.
- Uniform Probate Code – Guardianship of an Incapacitated Person — NMSA 1978, §§ 45-5-301 et seq.
- Special Education Ombud Act — NMSA 1978, §§ 28-16C-1 et seq.
- Supported Decision-Making Act — NMSA 1978, §§ 24-7D-1 et seq.

Appendix B — FY28 Performance Measures Summary

Program	FY28 Performance Measures
Center for Self-Advocacy	Number of individuals reached through accessible multimedia communications; number of outreach, education, or resource-sharing activities; number of leadership development opportunities; number of individuals completing disability-related training; number of financial literacy and benefits-planning outreach, education, or resource-sharing activities.
Office of the Special Education Ombud	Number of cases assigned for individual family advocacy; number of cases reactivated; percentage of individuals receiving service-quality follow-up surveys; number of district liaison trainings conducted.
Office of Guardianship	Percentage of complaints processed and resolved in compliance with state administrative code; percentage of guardianship contractors receiving comprehensive service reviews; average time spent on the guardianship wait list; average monthly number of people on the wait list; number of assessments, welfare visits, comprehensive service review interviews, protected-person visits, and related monitoring contacts.

Appendix C — Developmental Disabilities Council Membership as of Aug 19, 2026

Self-Advocates & Family Members

- Amelia-Ann Dickey - Self-Advocate
- Crystal Garcia - Self-Advocate
- Crystal Jackson - Family Member
- Deanna Cole - Family Member
- Elaine Concho - Family Member
- Dr. Elisheva Levin - Self-Advocate / Council Secretary
- Joel Davis - Family Member / Council Chair
- Jo Ellen Ransom - Family Member
- Joseph Jaramillo - Family Member
- Laurel Deans - Self-Advocate
- Lystra John - Self-Advocate
- Olivia Penaloza - Family Member
- Richard Segura - Self-Advocate
- Selma Ramos-Nevarez - Family Member
- Stephanie Rodriguez - Family Member
- Tarra Main - Family Member
- Valentin Anaya - Family Member / Council Treasurer
- **Open Positions - 4**



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State Agencies & Other Organizations

- Marcia Moriarta, PsyD / Pat Osbourn - University of New Mexico Center for Development & Disability
- Gary Housepian / Tim Gardner - Disability Rights New Mexico
- Emily Kaltenbach / Marylou Poli - Aging and Long Term Services Department
- Valerie Sandoval / Allegra Carpenter - Children, Youth, and Families Department
- Gina DeBlassie / Scott Doan -Department of Health
- Dr. Stephon Scott / Mario Lucero - Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Elizabeth Groginsky / Emily Stern - Early Childhood Education and Care Department
- Kari Armijo / Kristi Guinn - Health Care Authority
- Mariana Padilla / Jill Vice - Public Education Department - Special Education
- Helen “Laura” Speer - Non-Profit Service Provider
- Isaiah Fuller - Direct Service Provider
- John Arango - Civil Legal Services Commission / Non-Government Agency
- Lanthia Miles - LMG Consulting / Non-Government Agency
- Laurie Ross-Brennan - Laurie Ross-Brennan & Associates / Direct Service Provider